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INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 4158
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 4430
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 9514
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 000929

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SUBJECT: FORMER PM THAPA STRESSES KING MUST BE MENTALLY
READY TO ACT

REF: KATHMANDU 864 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Thapa Receives Indication King Might Move

1. (C) On April 7, Surya Bahadur Thapa, former Prime Minister and current chairman of Rastriya Jyanashakti Party, told the Ambassador that he had recently met with Prabhakar Rana who convinced Thapa to have "not exactly hope, but some indicator" that the King was thinking of moving. Thapa recounted what Rana had told him, which matched closely with what Rana told the Ambassador on March 31 (reftel). Thapa noted that he and Rana were not close, and in the past had communicated through a mutual friend. Thus he inferred that the King had specifically sent Rana to see him, to sound him out. Saying "up until now, the Maoist public relations are superior to other leaders'," Thapa noted that the Maoists were gaining ground, and the sooner the King acted, the better.

King Must Be Mentally Ready to Give Up Power

2. (C) Rana reportedly asked Thapa if the Parties were willing to take the initiative. Thapa noted that Rana stopped there, and was not explicit on what exactly the Parties should be willing to take the initiative to do. Thapa explained to Rana that the key factor was the mental preparedness of the King. Unless the King was ready to accept that he would have to limit his powers, "all things" would be "futile." Thapa said he had told Rana that things had "gone far away" from the situation of even one year ago, and that the situation was much more "complicated" now. He explained that the King could not solve everything in "one stroke" or address only one factor, as that would "not be enough and would fail." Thapa explained that there needed to be "behind the scenes" work to ensure that any reaching out to the Parties would work. He noted that the Parties would not respond directly to the King at this time. The 12-point understanding between the Parties and the Maoists made it "very difficult" for the Parties. Only if the Parties were assured of the sincerity of the King, would they enter into

discussions. Thapa noted that the Parties were waiting for the King's New Year's message on April 14 as an indicator of what the King was thinking and planning. Thapa explained that Rana promised to convey the importance of being mentally prepared to the King.

Outside Advisor Needed

13. (C) Thapa opined that, rather than the King trying to solve things by himself or with Nepali advisors, the King needed an outside advisor who gave "good advice." Thapa explained that now was not the time for the King to be spending long stretches of time in Pokhara away from outside advice. "My inner heart says he is contemplating what must be done," Thapa commented. But, absent good advice, Thapa worried that, even though the King appeared to recognize his roadmap was not working, he might act hastily. Thapa noted that a visit by Dr. Kissinger soon would be "a very good idea." He pointed out that the King had few outside advisors who were not official visitors. Dr. Kissinger was someone whom the King could listen to with respect. "Whether he likes it or not, the essential part is to trust essential friends," Thapa commented.

Comment

14. (C) Thapa's prescription for the King to be mentally prepared and willing to give up power, to not act hastily while working on a plan to reach out, and to take proper outside advice seems reasonable and well balanced. However, it remains to be seen if the King will take anyone's advice. (Note: Thapa plans to visit the U.S. May 19-June 5 to attend

his granddaughter's graduation and meet with people in Washington. End note.)
MORIARTY